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Letter dated 16 December 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Austria in November 2009 (see annex). This assessment was prepared under my responsibility following consultation with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Thomas **Mayr-Harting**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 16 December 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Austria (November 2009)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Austria in November 2009, the Security Council addressed a wide range of issues, including on Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, the Middle East and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Security Council held 16 meetings, including two open debates, six briefings and three debates, as well as 13 consultations of the whole. The open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, Michael Spindelegger. At the meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1894 (2009).

The Council adopted four resolutions (on protection of civilians in armed conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina, sanctions relating to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Somalia), two presidential statements (on Guinea-Bissau and Iraq) and three statements to the press (on the election in Afghanistan, Somalia and the Lord's Resistance Army).

Africa

Guinea-Bissau

On 5 November, at a formal meeting, the Council heard a briefing by the Representative of the Secretary-General, Joseph Mutaboba, on the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/552). The Council also heard briefings by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa, and by the Chairperson of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Maria Luiza Riberio Viotti of Brazil. During subsequent consultations of the whole, Council members expressed strong support for peace consolidation in Guinea-Bissau building upon the positive momentum created by the free, fair and transparent elections of June and July 2009. Council members also underlined the necessity of comprehensive and all-encompassing security sector reform.

Following the consultations of the whole, the Council adopted a statement by the President of the Council (S/PRST/2009/29), in which it welcomed the peaceful presidential elections of June and July 2009, reaffirmed its support for the peace consolidation efforts in Guinea-Bissau, and reiterated the importance of consolidating democracy, security, the rule of law, national reconciliation and the fight against impunity to ensure sustainable peace. The Council also underlined the

challenges faced with respect to the security sector, as well as the necessity of pursuing and implementing an effective and comprehensive national strategy to be supported by international partners. The Council furthermore welcomed the ongoing planning for the transition of UNOGBIS to an Integrated Peacebuilding Office (UNIOGBIS) on 1 January 2010.

The situation in the Great Lakes region

On 9 November, at a formal meeting, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, President Olusegun Obasanjo. The Special Envoy informed the Council about his intentions to take a step back from his role as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region at the end of his year, owing to the progress achieved with regard to his mandate. At the same time the Special Envoy expressed his readiness to further engage in the process if the Council deemed it necessary. To further positive developments in the Great Lakes region, the Special Envoy recommended an inclusive umbrella approach, bringing together the United Nations, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and also including other international actors active in the region. In the consultations of the whole that followed, Council members thanked the Special Envoy as well as his co-facilitator, President Benjamin Mkapa, for their valuable contributions to the peace process in the region. Council members underlined the necessity of the full implementation of the agreements of 23 March, the fight against impunity and comprehensive security sector reform. The Council members reiterated their concern about the ongoing presence of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as the worrying situation of the civilian population and the grave effects on civilians of Kimia II, the military operation undertaken by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with support from the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). In this regard, Council members welcomed the Secretary-General's recent decision to stop MONUC support for Congolese Armed Forces units implicated in grave human rights violations.

After the meeting, the President of the Council made remarks to the press, conveying the Council's gratitude for the work of Special Envoy President Obasanjo and his co-facilitator President Mkapa, noting the progress made in the region also due to their active engagement, and encouraging the parties to the agreements of March 23 to work together in a spirit of compromise and commitment to achieve full implementation. The President of the Council reiterated the Council's deep concern over the humanitarian crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and welcomed the recent decision to stop MONUC support for Armed Forces units implicated in grave human rights violations.

On 17 November, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, on the situation in the areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA); he informed the Council that LRA had developed into a veritable regional problem, which could be solved only by a well-coordinated approach including the countries in the region but also the relevant United Nations peacekeeping missions. Council members condemned the activities of LRA and underlined that the protection of civilians must be of the utmost priority in actions undertaken in the fight against LRA. The President of the Council read out a statement to the press after the meeting, in which

the members of the Council condemned the attacks carried out by LRA in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and the Sudan and expressed their deep concern about the threats posed by LRA to the civilian population, the conduct of humanitarian operations and regional stability. The members of the Council also commended States in the region for their cooperation, encouraged them to further increase it, and also encouraged the relevant peacekeeping operations to work together to achieve the protection of civilians.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 19 November, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, updating the Council on the military operation Kimia II, undertaken by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the support of MONUC. Council members expressed their grave concern about the humanitarian situation in the region and again welcomed the Secretary-General's recent decision to stop MONUC support for Armed Forces units implicated in grave human rights violations. Members stressed the importance of conditionality of support to the Armed Forces, as well as adequate training and vetting. After the meeting, the President of the Council made remarks to the press, conveying the Council's gratitude for the briefing of the Assistant Secretary-General, providing it with useful information for the upcoming renewal of the MONUC mandate. The President of the Council reiterated the commitment to the fight against impunity, as well as the Council's deep concern over the humanitarian crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and welcomed the recent decision to stop MONUC support for Armed Forces units implicated in grave human rights violations.

On 25 November, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing by the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ertuğrul Apakan, Permanent Representative of Turkey, on the final report of the Group of Experts (S/2009/603), and on deliberations among Committee members on the Group of Experts' report at the Committee's informal consultations on 18 and 20 November.

On 30 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1896 (2009), by which it renewed the sanctions regime relating to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and extended the mandate of the Group of Experts until 30 November 2010.

Madagascar

On 17 November, during closed consultations, under "Other matters", the Council was briefed by the United Nations Senior Political Adviser on Madagascar, Tiébilé Dramé. He briefed the Council on the consensus agreement reached among Malagasy parties in Addis Ababa on 6 November as well as the ongoing electoral assistance mission to Madagascar. Council members welcomed the consensus agreement obtained in Addis Ababa on 6 November. They supported the efforts of the United Nations in the process, in particular the consulting electoral mission sent to Madagascar on 16 November. Council members expressed their hope that the political forces in Madagascar would rapidly conclude the formation of the government. They encouraged the joint mediation team to continue its efforts to help to implement the next steps agreed in Addis Ababa, in particular the

referendum on the Constitution and the organization of the elections. Following the meeting, the President of the Council made remarks to the press conveying the main views of Council members.

Somalia

On 16 November, during closed consultations, the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, Claude Heller, Permanent Representative of Mexico, presented the Committee's 120-day report on its work. The Council also conducted a review of the measures set out in paragraphs 1, 3 and 7 of Council resolution 1844 (2008). The Council noted that these measures remain necessary to address the situation in Somalia, which constitutes a threat to international peace and security in the region.

On 18 November, at a public meeting, the Council received a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery in territorial waters and the high seas off the coast of Somalia, on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/590). He emphasized that international naval deployments and the self-protection measures of vessels had reduced the number of successful piracy incidents, but that piracy was a symptom of instability in Somalia, which should be addressed by a concerted and coordinated effort at all levels. In that regard he also described the various efforts of United Nations entities, such as the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). Council members welcomed the engagement of organizations and States that cooperate with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in the fight against piracy and the work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. They also urged prosecution of piracy suspects and called for assistance to those countries in the region, in particular Kenya and Seychelles, that were willing to accept those apprehended by international naval forces in order to prosecute them.

On 30 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1897 (2009), by which it renewed for a period of 12 months the authorizations set out in resolutions 1846 (2008) and 1851 (2008) granted to States and regional organizations cooperating with the Transitional Federal Government in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.

Sudan

On 30 November, at a formal meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/592), and by African Union-United Nations Joint Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassolé, on the political process. In the consultations of the whole that followed, Council members expressed their full support to UNAMID and for Mr. Bassolé's efforts as Joint Chief Mediator. The members of the Council stated that the political process for Darfur had reached a critical point and, therefore, called on all parties to commit themselves to finding a peaceful way forward and in particular also called upon all those that have not yet joined the peace process to do so without delay. The members of the Council also expressed their strong concern at attacks on UNAMID staff and humanitarian workers. They called for all parties to

unconditionally guarantee full access as well as the security of humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel, for the immediate release of hostages, and for perpetrators to be brought to justice. Members of the Council continued to press for UNAMID to be deployed and be able to operate with full efficiency. They further stressed that they will, through the Joint Chief Mediator, continue to monitor the Doha peace process. Following the meeting, the President made remarks to the press conveying the main views of Council members.

Asia

Nepal

On 6 November, the Council heard an open briefing by the Representative of the Secretary-General, Karin Landgren, on the situation in Nepal and the work of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN); she also introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General on UNMIN (S/2009/553). In the subsequent closed consultations the members of the Council exchanged views on the peace process and reiterated the need for all parties to work together in a spirit of cooperation to take the peace process forward and create the conditions for the completion of the UNMIN mandate. Following the meeting, the President of the Council made remarks to the press, in which he reaffirmed the Council's support for the peace process and the work of UNMIN.

Afghanistan

On 6 November, during consultations of the whole, the Secretary-General briefed the Council on his visit to the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan on 1 and 2 November. He underlined that the main objective of the visit was to show solidarity with United Nations staff after the terrorist attacks of 29 October directed against the United Nations in Kabul. He informed the Council about temporary measures taken to enhance the security of United Nations staff, stressing that there was no intention of evacuating or reducing the capacity of the United Nations in Afghanistan. He furthermore stressed the need to create a new compact between the Government of Afghanistan and its people, as well as gradual enhancement of Afghan ownership. The Council members welcomed the continued commitment of the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to support the people and the Government of Afghanistan in their quest for peace, security and stability. Following the consultations, the President of the Council read out a statement to the press acknowledging the conclusion of the electoral process, congratulating the people of Afghanistan on their determined, active engagement and participation in the elections and commending the efforts of those who worked to ensure a credible process. The members stressed the need for a renewed inclusive political process and called for the new Government of Afghanistan to effectively address the issues facing the country. They reiterated their commitment to support Afghanistan on its path towards peace, reconciliation, democracy and reconstruction and condemned the violent and terrorist activities by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups.

Iraq

On 16 November, at an open meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ad Melkert, briefed the Council on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009) (S/2009/585). The Permanent Representative of Iraq, Ambassador Hamid al-Bayati, presented the views of the Government of Iraq. In subsequent consultations of the whole, Council members expressed full support for the continuing role in Iraq of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and agreed that work on the forthcoming elections, national reconciliation and humanitarian issues were key priorities. Following informal consultations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/30), in which it welcomed the agreement reached on 8 November in the Iraqi Council of Representatives on amendments to the electoral law of Iraq; endorsed the continued assistance of UNAMI in the preparation of the Iraqi national parliamentary elections planned for January 2010, and endorsed the Secretary-General's appeal to all political blocs and their leaders in Iraq to demonstrate true statesmanship during the election campaign and participate in a spirit of national unity. The Council also underlined its condemnation in the strongest terms of the series of terrorist attacks that occurred on 19 August and 25 October 2009 in Baghdad. Furthermore, the Council welcomed the recent visit of United Nations officials to Iraq for preliminary consultations related to Iraq's security and sovereignty.

Middle East

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 24 November, the Council heard a briefing on the situation in the Middle East by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios. He reported that political efforts towards a negotiated two-State solution had reached a deep and worrying impasse, even as security and economic efforts had continued on the ground. He reiterated the Secretary-General's call for immediate action to strengthen the process, a reaffirmation of road map requirements and their implementation, and clear terms of reference for negotiations on all core issues grounded in the resolutions of the Council and agreements reached between the parties. He recalled that the Secretary-General had issued a statement deploring Israel's continued settlement activity and had expressed his dismay at the continuation of demolitions and evictions in Jerusalem. He pointed out that the situation in East Jerusalem underlined the importance of parties refraining from provocations and incitement. As to the situation in the Gaza Strip, he recalled that key elements of resolution 1860 (2009) remained to be fulfilled. He expressed concern at the deterioration of public infrastructure, environmental degradation and destruction of livelihoods in the Gaza Strip, and that no meaningful progress had been made to kick-start essential United Nations civilian construction activities. He reported that 12 rockets and mortars were fired from Gaza into southern Israel during the reporting period.

During subsequent consultations of the whole, Council members urged the parties to rapidly resume peace negotiations. They stressed the need for Israelis and Palestinians to fulfil their road map obligations and a number called for the complete freeze of settlement activity by Israel, including in East Jerusalem.

Members expressed concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and reiterated their call for the full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009).

Lebanon

On 10 November, the Council held informal consultations on the situation in Lebanon, and was briefed by the Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Michael Williams, who presented the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2009/566). He highlighted the latest developments in Lebanon, in particular the formation of a national unity government on 9 November. He underlined the importance of an early reconvening of the National Dialogue to resume discussions on issues of fundamental importance to Lebanon and concerning the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). He also reported on a number of serious incidents and violations of the resolution and informed the Council on the outstanding issues. The Council also received a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, who updated members on developments in the operational and security aspects of the activities of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in its area of operation. The members of the Council welcomed the progress achieved by the formation of the new unity government of Lebanon and expressed their continued support for the work of UNIFIL and of the Special Coordinator.

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 23 November, the High Representative and European Union Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, briefed the Council during a public debate on the basis of his second report to the Secretary-General (see S/2009/588), covering the period from 1 May to 31 October 2009. He reported that, owing to the lack of progress in meeting the five conditions and two requirements, the Peace Implementation Council at its meeting on 18 and 19 November was not able to make a positive assessment which would allow for the closure of the Office of the High Representative and the transition to a reinforced European Union Special Representative. The Chairman of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers, Nikola Spiric, made a statement to the Council, which also heard from the presidency of the European Union and Serbia.

On 18 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1895 (2009), by which it authorized for a further period of 12 months, until 19 November 2010, the European Union stabilization force (EUFOR) mandated to ensure continued compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995.

Thematic and general issues

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 19 November, during consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing by the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Ertuğrul Apakan, Permanent Representative of Turkey, in accordance with paragraph 12 (g) of that resolution and covering the period from 14 August to

19 November 2009. Following the briefing Council members expressed their appreciation for the work of the Committee and its Chairman, exchanged views on the work of the Committee during that period and noted with interest the interim report of the Panel of Experts submitted to the Council on 11 November in accordance with paragraph 26 (d) of resolution 1874 (2009) and the deadline agreed by the Council on 14 September. Council members welcomed the commencement of the work of the Panel of Experts and expressed their expectation that the Panel would continue its work, in accordance with relevant Council resolutions and under the direction of the Committee, so as to achieve full implementation of the measures set out in its resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009). Council members stressed the need for full compliance with those resolutions and recalled that the ultimate objective of these efforts remains the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner. Council members welcomed and encouraged current diplomatic efforts to achieve this goal.

Coordinated reports by Chairmen of counter-terrorism committees

On 13 November, the Council held an open debate during which the Chairmen of the three subsidiary bodies of the Council dealing with counter-terrorism, the Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004), briefed the Council about the Committees' work during the past six months. At the outset, the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, Ranko Vilovic, Permanent Representative of Croatia, informed the Council about the cooperation of the three Committees and their respective expert groups, in which it was highlighted that the three Committees attach great importance to the coordination and cooperation among their expert groups, namely the Al-Qaida/Taliban Monitoring Team, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). With regard to the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Ambassador Vilovic informed the Council about the adoption of the interim review of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the finalization of the preliminary implementation assessments and the related ongoing stocktaking process, as well as about visits to and dialogue with Member States. The Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Jorge Urbina, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, highlighted the comprehensive review, including open meetings with participation of the wider United Nations membership and relevant international and regional organizations. The Chairman also informed the Council about ongoing outreach activities, such as regional workshops and country-specific activities. The Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban, Thomas Mayr-Harting, Permanent Representative of Austria, briefed the Council about the status of the implementation of resolution 1822 (2008), in particular the status of the review of all entries in the Consolidated List and the publication of narrative summaries of reasons for listing. In addition, he informed the Council about challenges related to the Consolidated List and the Committee's procedures and mentioned in this context the adoption of a new Council resolution by the end of the year. In the subsequent debate, Council members expressed support for the activities of the three Committees, and a number of United Nations Member States addressed related issues.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

On 11 November, the Council held an open debate, presided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, Michael Spindelegger, on the item "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" on the basis of a concept paper submitted by the Permanent Representative of Austria (S/2009/567).

At the outset, the Council adopted unanimously resolution 1894 (2009), drafted by Austria and co-sponsored by 30 countries, in which it reiterated its willingness to respond to situations of armed conflict where civilians are being targeted or humanitarian assistance is being obstructed. The Council also recognized the need for comprehensive operational guidance on peacekeeping missions' tasks and responsibilities in the implementation of protection of civilians mandates, and requested the Secretary-General to develop, in close consultation with Member States, including troop- and police-contributing countries, and other relevant actors, an operational concept for the protection of civilians. The Council requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all relevant missions with protection mandates develop comprehensive protection strategies; and requested him to develop guidance for United Nations missions on the reporting on the protection of civilians with a view to enhancing the Council's monitoring and oversight of the implementation of protection mandates.

The Council then heard statements by the Secretary-General; the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, who spoke on behalf of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; and the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kyung-wha Kang. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Security Council's engagement with the protection of civilians in armed conflict, all three speakers acknowledged certain progress made in the past 10 years, but stressed the need for the Council, the Member States and the United Nations to reinvigorate their commitment to international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law in order to ensure more effective protection of civilians in armed conflict.

The ensuing debate, during which 61 delegations took the floor, revealed a broad consensus that greater efforts were required to enhance respect by parties to armed conflict for international law, so as to ensure protection for the civilian populations in armed conflict. Participants agreed that the implementation of protection mandates by United Nations peacekeeping operations needs to be further improved and that this requires close consultation, including between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries, prior to the establishment, and throughout the life cycle of, peacekeeping missions.

Post-conflict peacebuilding

On 25 November, during an open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding, the Council invited the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission, Heraldo Muñoz, Permanent Representative of Chile, to introduce the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its third session (S/2009/444). The Council also heard statements by the representatives of Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, El Salvador, Canada, Finland, India, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and Switzerland, at their request. The Council members commended the Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office for their work in the third year of operation. The

Council also welcomed the work of the Commission's country-specific configurations and encouraged the Commission to further improve its working methods, in order to assist the countries concerned in delivering peace dividends on the ground. They welcomed the strengthening of the Commission's coordination and cooperation with relevant stakeholders within and outside the United Nations system. The Council members further extended their support for strengthening interaction between the Council and the Commission and underlined their commitment to refining the Commission's work by constructively contributing to its 2010 review.

Annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

On 12 November, as previously agreed by the other members of the Council, the President of the Council presented to the General Assembly the annual report of the Security Council (A/64/2), covering the period from 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2009.

On behalf of all members of the Council, the President of the Security Council stated that during the reporting period the Council addressed a wide range of regional, thematic and general issues. It held 228 formal meetings, of which 205 were public, in addition to 18 meetings with troop-contributing countries. The Council also held 141 consultations of the whole. In that period, the Council adopted 53 resolutions and 43 presidential statements, and issued 35 statements to the press. During the reporting period, the Council's extensive work was also characterized by an increase in the holding of open debates and open briefings.

Statement at the solemn meeting in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

On 30 November, the President of the Security Council made a statement, on behalf of the Council members, at the solemn meeting in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In his remarks, the President of the Security Council said that while the situation on the ground remained of serious concern to the Council, the international community had witnessed intensified diplomatic efforts to relaunch bilateral negotiations during the year. He recalled that Council members had consistently welcomed and encouraged these efforts and strongly hoped that they would advance the process towards the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The President of the Council stressed that, to make progress, the parties must avoid actions that undermined confidence and could prejudice the outcomes of negotiations.